

GAS.—A tremendous explosion took place at the Sheffield workhouse, on Saturday last, with extensive damage to the building throughout. Some account of the origin of the accident, as described in the local *Times*, may be instructive, from the warning it conveys. The committee room is lighted by a sliding pendant attached to the ceiling. The vertical tube is filled with water to prevent escape of gas, and ought to be kept full, otherwise when drawn down there is an escape of gas. The office cleaner, when she lighted the gas, drew this pendant quite down, and, the water being deficient, the consequence was a copious escape of gas, which accumulated at the top of the room till it reached the gaslight below, and then exploded. The climax was most probably expedited by the admission of atmospheric air at the moment, the woman having just opened the room door. The best mode of detecting a deficiency of water in a sliding pendant is, once every three months or so to draw the slide quite down. A bubbling noise occasioned by the air in the lower part of the tube ascending through the water is a sure sign of danger from want of water. A lead gas-pipe, extending between the floor of the board-room and the ceiling of the committee-room was also found slit on one side, and it is suspected that an escape of gas had been going on there for some time. If so, the space beneath the floor of the ceiling would probably be full of gas, ready to ignite the moment that the explosion took place. Had the pipe not been enclosed, the smell of the escaping gas would have given timely warning of the leakage. This disaster, following on the alarming explosion in the vegetable market in this town, and the destructive explosion at Mawbrough, ought to induce habits of greater caution and circumspection among consumers of gas generally. Parties competent to form an opinion thought that the necessary repairs to the workhouse could not cost less than a hundred pounds.—"The spirits of light and darkness," says *Felix Farley*, are struggling at Taunton, in the shape of gas and anti-gas partisans. This populous town was again left on Tuesday night in a state of utter darkness; our public functionaries having failed to effect an arrangement to obviate this dangerous annoyance.—A deficiency of gas is also complained of at Newcastle and Gateshead, where there is often a scarcity of coals (?), as we once more particularly explained to our readers. In the present instance, however, mere annoyance to the consumers is alleged to be the cause of the deficiency. The complaint, according to the *Gateshead Observer*, is very general throughout both towns, and a rival establishment is threatened.—In Hartlepool, says a contemporary, 6s. 8d. per 1,000 feet is charged to private consumers, whilst at Durham the price is from 3s. to 4s., according to quantity, and at Sunderland, 4s. net. The gas consumers at Hartlepool are endeavouring to effect a reduction to the Durham rates.—The lecturing campaign is recommencing. At the Portsmouth Athenæum, on Monday last, Mr. G. Garnett addressed an assemblage of gas consumers and others on the subject of gas-light, when he "took the opportunity," says the *Hants Independent*, "of explaining and demonstrating the misapprehension existing as to the interest of the gas manufacturers being the supplying of an inferior article at an exorbitant price, and endeavoured to prove on the contrary that it was the interest of the latter to supply the very best article at the lowest possible price—for by doing so alone could the manufacturer hope for an increased demand."

THE BIRMINGHAM EXPOSITION OF MANUFACTURES AND ART has closed. During the last week the rooms were visited by nearly 19,000 persons, and the total number of visitors since the commencement exceeds 100,000. The receipts have been about 3,065*l*. There will, doubtless, after payment of all expenses, be a handsome surplus; and we again express a hope, in which we are joined, we see, by the local press, that it may be devoted to the establishment, in the shape of a Museum of Art, of a permanent and classified Exposition of Birmingham Manufactures.

BUILDERS' BENEVOLENT INSTITUTION.—It has been determined by the directors of this Institution, to have a second anniversary ball in aid of their funds, and a committee has been appointed to obtain stewards, and make other arrangements.

A GATESHEAD CONTRIBUTION TO A TURKISH MOSQUE.—When Mr. W. L. Haile was discoursing of "progression and improvement," before Salih Effendi and the Gateshead Mechanics' Institute, and Mr. Wörnum was dilating in the lecture-room of the Lit. and Phil. on the magnificence of the mosque of Amrou, few were aware that we had "cunning workmen in brass" employed on the Tyne in the construction of a gas-chandelier for a Turkish mosque in Constantinople. Mr. Thomas Crawford, of the Walker ironworks, acting on behalf of his brother, Mr. James Crawford, of Beshickdash, Constantinople, now manager of the gas-works in the Turkish capital, lately handed the order for it to Messrs. Abbot and Co., of Gateshead Park ironworks. We have seen it lighted up, with its twelve lamps of ground glass, and think that our Mahomedan brethren will agree with us that it does credit to old Gateshead. The circle on which the lights are fixed is 8 feet in diameter. The dome of the mosque rises 65 feet from the floor, and the diameter is 40 feet. In accordance with instructions, the design is plain, yet elegant. The material is brass, French-bronzed. The ornamental work consists wholly of foliage. Crosses or glass drops—figure of man or beast—Messrs. Abbot were forbidden to introduce. Additional burners and glasses are to be sent, with several yards of caoutchouc or gutta percha tubes (another illustration of "progression and improvement")—from which we may infer that moveable lights are wanted. Thus, then, not only in the Gateshead Mechanics' Institute, but also in the mosques of the East, the sons of men have emerged from the obscurity of "tallow candles" into "gas and grandeur."—*Gateshead Observer*.

AN IRISH ECCLESIOLOGICAL SOCIETY has been established. The president is the Rev. Charles W. Russell, D.D., Maynooth; and Lords Bellew and Arundel and Surrey, Sir W. Lyons, and several of the prelates and priesthood, and other members of the Roman Catholic Church, have joined the society. At the opening of its proceedings, the president gave an inaugural address in which, speaking of its object and design, he said, "To regulate the true principles of Christian Art, especially in the building and decoration of churches, is the object of the science of ecclesiology. For though in its more limited application, and in the more strictly technical sense of the name, it might seem to be confined to one particular department, that of architecture, it is understood, nevertheless, to embrace all that relates to the externals of religion, and to comprise not alone architecture, but also painting, sculpture, church decoration, ecclesiastical costume, glass-staining, music, engraving, illuminations, and some ornamental typography in adaptation of sacred uses. Such, I may add, are the objects to which our society proposes to devote its humble labours." *The Amateur* is of opinion that in Ireland "there is ample room and verge for several such societies, each suited to the religious temperature of their respective communions, but all tending to encourage a closer connection of art with Christianity, and thus raising it to the highest purposes of its mission, as an element in the service of the Creator, and leading the mind to the highest and holiest thoughts."

THE BRISTOL AND WEST OF ENGLAND ARCHITECTURAL SOCIETY, held a general meeting on the 10th inst., the Archdeacon of Bristol, in the chair, when the secretary, the Rev. E. J. Carter, read the minutes of the previous meeting, and after some formal business, the Rev. Mr. Ellacombe communicated a paper on Church Bells and Belfry, in which he went into their origin, and exhibited various illustrations of the large bells of some of the principal churches in England and on the Continent. His remarks were also illustrated by the model of a church bell. Mr. Ellacombe discountenanced the popular supposition respecting the baptism of bells, and thought the water used at the time of their being put up was merely for the purpose of washing them. He thought the ceremony used, which he had with him, implied merely a benedictive consecration. He afterwards went into some interesting particulars respecting the weights of the various large bells in Europe and the manner of fixing and ringing them, and also enlarged upon the subject of peal ringing

as practised in England. He then read some remarks on bell-ringers and their conduct, which he was sorry to say was very bad, and he thought ought to be brought under the notice of the authorities.

THE METROPOLITAN COMMISSION OF SEWERS had meetings on Friday and Saturday last, at which the only public business done consisted in the dismissal of Mr. Hale, C.E., an officer of the court, for allowing an article, headed "Experiments on the discharge of Water through Pipes," to appear in the pages of a contemporary before the commissioners had had an opportunity of considering the same, or the results of the same experiments, which had been instituted at the expense and order of the commission. The court then formed itself into a committee (at which the majority of the city representatives were present) "to consider the course to be adopted respecting the plans sent in to the commissioners for the drainage of the metropolis."

THE LIVERPOOL ARCHITECTURAL SOCIETY.—The fortnightly meeting of this society was held on Wednesday evening, last week; Mr. J. A. Pictou occupying the chair. The architectural designs for the student's prize were suspended on the walls. Mr. Reed, the secretary, exhibited a model, and made some observations as to the method of deafening floors adopted by Fox and Barrett. Mr. Howard offered some remarks on decoration, the laws of proportion, and the various styles of ornamenting in general use.

MARDEN'S STENCH TRAP.—This trap is so constructed that it is always shut, and it will carry off any dirt or rubbish which may fall through the grating over it. It consists mainly of a cylinder, divided into four chambers, which turns on a pivot below the receiver, and is made air-tight by means of vulcanized India rubber. On receiving water from above, the cylinder revolves, bringing beneath the receiver another division, and emptying the first. The inventor suggests that, by means of a stream of water and a pipe from the gully-hole to the top of an adjoining house, the cylinder, in revolving, would serve to ventilate the sewer.

MR. ROBERT STEPHENSON, the engineer, has been made a Knight of the Order of the Legion of Honour.

STEALING FROM THE VATICAN.—A great sensation has been caused in Rome by the discovery that no less than 137 valuable medals have been stolen out of the museum of the Vatican. Some of these medals were of great rarity, and their loss is a public misfortune.

RAILWAY JOTTINGS.—The springing of some arches was observed on Tuesday week, at the new station, at Liverpool, of the Lancashire and Yorkshire and East Lancashire Company. The pressure of a heavy wall, by which they are surmounted, is blamed. Balk timbers were immediately prepared, and applied as buttresses to the wall and centres to the arches, and the wall itself is in course of renewal.—A contractor for excursion trains has announced his intention of taking passengers, "first-class travelling at less than a half-penny a mile, and second-class for about a farthing." From Leeds to Birmingham, 23*½* miles, the fare is to be—first-class, 8*½* d., and second-class, 5*½* d., allowing six hours in Birmingham, or the privilege of returning on the following day for an extra shilling. At the ordinary rates of travelling, the journey could not be accomplished for less than between 3*l*. and 4*l*., and at a penny a mile, would amount to a few pence short of 1*l*.—The new directors of the York, Newcastle, and Berwick Railway have adopted the principle of public competition, in the appointment of three general managers; one for passenger-traffic, at 500*l*. per annum; a second, for mineral traffic, at 400*l*.; and a third, for merchandise, at 400*l*., each manager's salary to be increased *pari passu* with the Company's profits.—The masonry of the piers in the bridge across the Tweed, at Berwick, was completed on Thursday week by Messrs. J. Graham and G. Storrar, sub-contractors, under Messrs. M'Kay and Co.—The remarkable feat of effecting a communication between London and Paris in eight-and-a-half hours, has been accomplished. The *Times* of Tuesday week was delivered in Paris at half-past one p.m., along with the Paris intelligence of Monday.